

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
PIGEON RIVER COUNTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL
October 16, 2009**

A meeting of the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council (PRCAC) was held on Friday, October 16, 2009 at the Pigeon River Country Management Unit Headquarters. Chairman Glasser called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken Glasser, Mike Castle, Carol Clute, Pete Gustafson, Jim Supina, Arch Reeves, Paul Rose, Mark Ennes, Dave Smethurst, Randy Sanders, John Walters, Jack Deming and Dick Myers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Brown, Rique Campa, Bob Hess, Bob Bolinger, and Mike Estes

EX-OFFICIO PRESENT Dayle Garlock, Brian Mastenbrook, and Scott Whitcomb

EX-OFFICIO ABSENT: Dave Borgeson, Rick Henderson and Tim Reis

OTHERS PRESENT: Mindy Koch, Lynne Boyd, Darlene Alexander, Andrea Ania, Judi Jarecki, Hank Moczul, Gordon McMullen, Stuart Smith, and Peggy Moczul

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:

Chairman Glasser welcomed everyone. Information was sent to the PRCAC concerning a plaque from Legal Milestone group. They would like to place this plaque in the Otsego County Courthouse honoring the Consent Order. Some Council members indicated it might be more appropriate at the Pigeon River Country Headquarters, but the Legal Milestone group prefers that it be at the Courthouse. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is supportive of placing the plaque in the Courthouse where it might be more visible.

AGENDA

Added three items, the election of officers, setting 2010 meeting dates and oil and gas questions for Merit Energy

APPROVAL OF July 17, 2009 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

John Walters requested by email a revision on the language in the Standard and Limitations Subcommittee report. Changes were made.

Motion by Supina, supprt by Walters to approve the July 17, 2009 revised minutes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

CHANDLER DAM REMOVAL

Andrea Ania from the US Fish and Wildlife Service presented information on behalf of Jennifer Gelb from Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. Both groups are funding partners along with DNR for the removal of the Chandler Dam located on the former Kronlund property. The purpose of the presentation was to give the PRCAC an opportunity to have input in the planning process. Estimated cost for the project is \$62,000 with a completion date of September 30, 2010. A handout was provided identifying completed tasks, remaining 2009 tasks and a detailed list of the anticipated construction sequence. The planning process is focusing on minimizing the environmental impacts of the dam removal. The

dam removal will probably be done in August or September 2010 when the stream is low. Equipment used on this project will be either new or nearly new to minimize the possibility of introducing invasive species to the river.

Whitcomb reported progress is being made preparing for the building removal at Chandler Dam, as well as the Perry and Hackett Lake properties. Bids for asbestos inspection have been submitted to Lansing for approval. It is likely that asbestos will be found. Bids will then be requested for the removal of any asbestos found in the properties. After the completion of that process, the buildings can be removed.

BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP AREA UPDATE

Lynne Boyd presented information on the process for implementing biodiversity stewardship areas (BSAs). She started with historical information on the Department's efforts, then outlined the steps that have been recently completed. There are several more teams looking at the recommendations made by the Eco Team. The PRCAC will have an opportunity for review of the recommendations during the internal review process as part of a focused stakeholder group. The recommendations will then be released to the public for comment. Lynne will keep Scott informed as the recommendations move through the process. The project completion is expected in the near future.

The Concept of Management is being considered during the review process. There are about 3.5 to 4 square miles within the Pigeon River Country boundaries that are currently included in the recommendations of the Eco Team. The final boundary of the biodiversity stewardship area will be considered during the compartment review process.

PIGEON RIVER BOUNDARY CHANGES

Mindy Koch acknowledged receipt of recommendation from the PRCAC to change the boundaries of the Pigeon River Country. DNR is taking the most current recommendation under advisement.

An update of the Concept of Management, including a review of the boundaries was just completed in November 2007. This update took several years to complete. The Pigeon River Country has the most restrictive Land Use Orders in Michigan, which is slightly in conflict with DNR direction of trying to encouraging people to utilize the outdoors, although the current restrictions are in place for valid reasons. It is possible that expanding the boundaries and overlaying the same restrictions may dilute the ability to maintain and enforce the Land Use Orders that are currently in place. These are some of the issues being considered prior to a decision on boundary changes is made.

Two other items were discussed. One came from Clute who thought that there are more violations of horse riding and enforcement is important. Additional signage may also help to try to educate riders.

The other item was a question concerning the merger of DNR and DEQ. Mindy has been designated as the DNR transition lead. The Governor has appointed Bruce Rasher as the transition manager. The process is just getting started and updates will be coming.

NEW BUSINESS

WEBB ROAD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Cheboygan County will be replacing the bridge over the Pigeon River on Webb Road. A representative from Northwoods Design presented information. The construction is expected to take two to three months and could start as soon as spring 2010. The new bridge will be wider and higher than the old bridge. The current river access will have to be moved because of the width of the new bridge and location of the guardrails.

A **Motion** was made by Rose and supported by Walters to encourage dialogue between the Unit

Manager and Northwoods Design to maintain at least as much access to the river as exists today. Motion carried.

PIGEON RIVER COUNTRY ACCESS PLAN

Scott Whitcomb presented information on the history and future of the vehicle access plan. It is considered the cornerstone of management of the area. The plan addresses vehicle, snowmobile, equestrian, and mountain biking access. The access plan is in need of an update, especially in the annexed areas to enable management of competing resources and protect sensitive areas. An additional goal of this update is to establish a process that can be used to create access plans in other management areas of the state.

The process that will be used in the update was detailed. Public input will be part of the process. Gustafson suggested to the Chair the PRCAC could assist in the process by forming a sub-committee. The timeframe for completion of the mapping process is relatively short. But the stakeholder input will come after the first of next year. Therefore discussion about forming a sub-committee can wait until the next PRCAC meeting in January.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A **Motion** was made by Smethurst and supported by Deming to form a nomination committee for the 2010 election of officers and postpone elections until the next meeting. Motion carried.

The nomination committee will include Meyers, Smethurst, and Walters.

SET 2010 MEETING DATES

The dates proposed for 2010 include January 15, April 9, July 16 and October 15. Supina ask if meetings could be moved from Friday to another night. The PRCAC wanted to keep the Friday meeting day at this time.

A **Motion** was made by Gustafson and supported by Supina to accept the proposed dates. Motion carried.

OIL AND GAS QUESTIONS FOR MERIT

Smethurst had a couple of question for Merit Energy. He wondered if Merit had considered using enhanced oil recovery to hasten the process. Merit feels there are pros and cons to this method and is not currently considering this option because of cost and availability of CO2. This matter was referred to the Oil and Gas sub-committee for further discussion.

The second question was concerning the necessity of night lighting at the CPF. Merit explained that the lights are necessary for security and safety.

BREAK

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

Law Enforcement Update

Officer Torsky addressed the concerns raised about horseback riding violations. He said there was no complaints reported that were actionable and there is a lack of officers available for monitoring. The other constraint is the State's budget. Officers are required to spend enforcement time partly based on funding sources. Ten years ago there were 66 more officers in the State.

There were no incidents during the September and October elk hunts. There was one Tribal issue that is being handled. Officers are not seeing an increase in the ORV use in the area since July.

DNR Forest, Mineral & Fire Management Division Update

Whitcomb presented his report on staffing, forest management, and update on building demolition. The Pickerel Lake campground will reopen November 1st. The Pigeon River Country Association is funding an overhaul of the display cases outside the front door of the Headquarters. An oil and gas production report was available for review.

Wildlife Division

Mastenbrook talked about accomplishments for 2009. The September elk hunt harvested 79 and to date the October hunt had harvested 42. Elk planning process will be taking place next year.

OTHER BUSINESS

Smethurst offered a resolution for the Otsego County Road Commission for their completion of the bridge over Pigeon River on Sturgeon Valley Road.

Whereas the Otsego County Road Commission involved the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council in the planning of the Sturgeon Valley Road bridge, and

Whereas the Otsego County Road Commission responded to suggestions by the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council, and

Whereas the Otsego County Road Commission has completed the bridge and it was done well,
Be it resolved the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council appreciates and thanks the Otsego County Road Commission and congratulations the Road Commission on a job well done.

A **Motion** made by Smethurst and supported by Supina to adopt the proposed resolution. Motion carried

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Biodiversity updates

Sub-committee on Road access

ADJOURN

Chairman Glasser adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Whitcomb, Secretary